**Spies**
by Michael Frayn

**Introduction**

New Windmill titles are supported with Student and Teaching resource sheets to engage students with the novel and to help you with your planning. Each set of resources includes a series of self-contained lessons with photocopiable worksheets, teaching notes and suggestions for Guided Reading. Each activity is mapped against the Framework to help you with your planning. There are also suggestions for further study areas including speaking and listening, writing and reading activities. If your students have enjoyed studying this novel there are suggestions of other New Windmills they may like to read for pleasure.

**Resources for Spies:**

- **Synopsis**
- **Activate prior learning**
- **Activities**
  - The Second World War
  - A newspaper report
  - Analytical writing
- **Guided reading**
  - Research skills
  - Newspaper reports
  - PDQ
- **Further study areas**
- **Reading for pleasure**

**Activities by Alan Pearce**

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Synopsis

Stephen Wheatley returns as an old man to the road he lived in as a child during the Second World War. He wants to make sense of events that occurred when he was a young child. The narrator explores the events of his childhood, sometimes looking back on them from an adult’s perspective, and sometimes presenting them as though they were happening in the present tense.

Stephen’s childhood friend, Keith Hayward has a vivid imagination and imagines that details in his mother’s diary prove that she is a German spy. The boys embark on an adventure that involves spying on Mrs Hayward, and making records of her movements.

The boys follow Mrs Hayward and discover that she is leaving things, such as cigarettes, in a metal box in a wood. Mrs Hayward discovers that she is being followed and has a very stern word with Stephen about the dangers he and Keith face, but this only increases the boys’ interest. Keith discovers that Mrs Hayward is taking provisions to an underground hideaway in the woods, where a tramp used to live, but then Mr Hayward becomes suspicious and limits his wife’s movements.

In desperation Mrs Hayward asks Keith to take a bag of food and medicine to the underground hideaway, but he is intercepted by Mr Hayward. Keith makes a very daring visit to the underground hideaway, with food that he steals from home, and he is asked to return a message to Mrs Hayward. Keith is convinced that he has now spoken to a German spy, and is confused by mixed loyalties.

The Police are called to the underground hideaway, and as the ‘spy’ tries to avoid them he is killed by a goods train.

The old man, Stephen Wheatley, realises that the fugitive was in fact Mrs Hayward’s brother-in-law, ‘Uncle Peter’, who had deserted from the RAF because of the guilt he felt bombing German cities. We also discover that Stephen’s family were German Jews, and Stephen had returned to live in Germany after the war. One reason for the old man’s journey back to his past is to try to decide where he belongs, in England or Germany.

Activate prior learning

It will be very helpful if the students know something about life in Britain during the Second World War. Ask them about the details that they know, probably from films and history lessons. Students might even be able to talk to relatives who are willing to share their own experiences. It would also be useful to ask the students to share their own fantasy games from their childhood, as this would remind the students that Stephen and Keith’s adventure is not unrealistic. Activity 1 asks the students to research into the conditions faced by civilians during the war, go to http://www.heinemann.co.uk/hotlinks and type in express code 000XP.
Activity 1 The Second World War

Framework Objectives

Year 7: R2 Use appropriate reading strategies; R6 Adopt active reading strategies; Wr14 describe an object, person or setting in a way that includes relevant details and is accurate and evocative.

Year 8: R2 Undertake independent research; Wr12 Describe an event, process or situation, using language with an appropriate degree of formality.

Year 9: R2 Synthesize information from a range of sources; Wr3 Write in Standard English; Wr11 Make telling use of descriptive details.

Activity aims:

- To research for relevant information.
- To produce a piece of information writing.

This activity asks the students to provide some background information to support a new edition of *Spies*. The students are asked to research into the conditions that civilians faced in Britain during WWII.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 2. The students are asked to re-read four extracts from *Spies*, and record any details that they can about the lives of British civilians during WWII.

- The first extract makes reference to the blackout, but also makes reference to Jews moving into the area. The students might not realise that everyone had to comply with the blackout, so that German bombers could not use lights as targets. The students might also not be aware that Jews began to arrive in Britain, seeking refuge from the Nazis.

- In the second extract we are told that civilians had to remove the wheels from their cars, so that an invading force could not use the vehicles. The students might not be aware that only the wealthy would have owned cars at the time.

- The third extract refers to absent relatives. Nearly all civilians would have been affected personally as relatives joined the forces and were posted overseas.

- The fourth extract makes reference to families having to take their food scraps to designated collection points so that the scraps could be used to feed pigs, rather than be wasted.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 3. The students are asked to produce a piece of information writing about the lives of British civilians during the Second World War. Some students might need help with the research process, particularly locating sources that are appropriate for their own reading abilities. The students are reminded of the stylistic conventions of information writing so the following terms might need to be revised: past tense; connectives; adjectives and adverbs; formal language.
Guided reading – Research skills

Activity 1 asks the students to engage in some research about the conditions for civilians during WWII. Select a group of students who would benefit from some help with research skills. Ask them to look at the passage on Resource Sheet 1, and to make notes about the conditions British civilians faced during WWII.

There are many interesting facts and figures in the passage, to deliberately distract the students. You should encourage the students to select only the information relevant to the research task: Conditions faced by British civilians during WWII.

1. All civilians were provided with a gas mask.
2. Civilians were encouraged to grow their own vegetables.
3. Civilians were encouraged to recycle all of their waste.
4. Over 62,000 British civilians were killed.
On 1st September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, and as a consequence two days later Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany. Britain had been expecting war for a long time and so they had made many preparations. For example, every person in Britain was provided with a gas mask with a charcoal and cotton wool filter.

After defeating France, Germany turned its attention to invading Britain. Bombers damaged all of the major cities in Britain, but brave pilots defended the country during the Battle of Britain, and Hitler’s planned invasion had to be called off. During the Second World War over 62,000 British civilians lost their lives. However, this figure does not compare to the 16,900,000 Russian civilians who were killed during the same period.

Because world trade was badly affected by the war, the Government encouraged everyone to grow their own vegetables. People were also encouraged to recycle all of their waste.
2 Civilians’ lives

Read the following extracts from Spies. Make notes in the boxes about what you have learnt about how British civilians lived during the period of the Second World War.

It was Keith who’d discovered that Trewinnick, the mysterious house next to his with the perpetually drawn blackout, was occupied by the Juice, a sinister organisation apparently behind all kinds of plots and swindles. It was Keith who’d discovered one Sunday evening on the railway embankment behind the houses, the secret passageway through which the Juice came and went. Or would have discovered in another moment or two, if his father hadn’t ordered him to be home in time to pipeclay his cricket boots, ready for school in the morning.

Page 12

The car was another perfection – a small family saloon with constellations of chromium-plated fitments glittering in the darkness of the garage, its bodywork and engine spotlessly maintained in constant readiness for the end of the war, when there would be petrol to run it again. Sometimes the only part of Keith’s father to be seen was his legs, projecting from a pool of light underneath the car, as he carried out the full regular schedule of checks and oil changes. All it was missing was its wheels. It stood in perfect immobility on four carefully carpentered wooden chocks, to prevent its being commandeered, as Keith explained, by invading Germans.

Page 16
Civilians’ lives

There was a photograph of Uncle Peter in a silver frame on the mantelpiece, smiling the same recklessly open smile as Auntie Dee, his peaked RAF officer’s cap set at an angle that echoes the recklessness of the smile. The Berrill girls’ father was away in the army somewhere, the McAfees’ son was doing his bit in the Far East. But no one had an absent relative who could compare with Uncle Peter. He was a bomber pilot, and he’d flown on special missions over Germany so dangerous and so secret that Keith could only hint at them. Around the photograph were silver cups he’d won at various sports. On the shelves were rows of the adventure stories he’d kept from his boyhood, which Keith was sometimes allowed to borrow. His very absence was a kind of presence. He was manifest in the little silver brooch that Auntie Dee always had pinned to her breast, that showed the three famous initials on a blue enamel background, with the famous wings outspread around them and the famous crown above. You felt his cheerful bravery in Auntie Dee’s own brave cheerfulness, his careless disregard for danger in the very untidiness of the house and the neglect of the garden.

The Avenue is a different kind of street altogether from the Close. The houses look superficially similar, but as soon as you turn the corner you know you’re stepping into alien territory, the beginning of the outside world. Within a few yards of the corner you run up against the War Effort – a smelly mess around the pig bins where the neighbourhood’s food scraps are collected.
3 Information writing

Introduction

Imagine that the publishers are going to publish a new edition of Spies. They know that students have some knowledge about the conditions soldiers faced during the Second World War, but they are not sure that students know very much about the conditions civilians faced. The publishers would like to include five pages of writing and illustrations to provide some details about what life was like for civilians during the Second World War.

Activity

Use your school library, your history department, the Internet, and any other sources you can think of, to find out how civilians lived during the Second World War. You are asked to find out information about the following:

- rationing
- evacuation
- blackouts
- Anderson shelters
- gas masks.

For your piece of information writing you will be expected to use the following stylistic conventions:

- write in the past tense
- use connectives to link ideas together
- avoid using too many adjectives and adverbs when you are presenting factual information
- use formal language.

Connectives that might be helpful: similarly, obviously, for example, however, despite this, above all, next, then, eventually.

The publishers would like this piece of information writing to be attractive, and so you will have to think carefully about the presentation.

- Use appropriate fonts.
- Use headings and sub-headings.
- Include illustrations.
- Make appropriate use of colour.
Activity 2 A newspaper report

Framework Objectives

Year 7: R2 Use appropriate reading strategies; R6 Adopt active reading strategies; R8 Infer and deduce meaning; Wr10 Organise texts appropriately; Wr11 Select and organise information.

Year 8: R4 Review active reading strategies; R7 Identify implied and explicit meaning; Wr5 Develop use of commentary; Wr10 Organise and present information.

Year 9: R1 Review and extend reading strategies; R3 Improve note-taking; R6 Comment on authorial perspective; Wr5 Explore different structures; Wr7 Entertain in non-fiction; Wr11 Make use of descriptive writing.

Activity aims:

- To consider the stylistic conventions of newspaper reports.
- To write a newspaper report.

This activity asks the students to imagine how the local newspaper would have reported the death of Mrs Hayward’s brother-in-law, Uncle Peter.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 4. The students are asked to identify stylistic features in a newspaper report: emotive language, adjective, interesting verb, adverb, quotation, exaggeration. The following examples can be found in the report:

- emotive language: ‘brutally murdered’
- adjective: ‘frightened’
- interesting verb: ‘perished’
- adverb: ‘violently’
- quotation: ‘This is another example of how civilians are suffering in this war. At least the poor family would have known nothing about it.’
- exaggeration: ‘violently rocked to its foundations’.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 5. The students are asked to write a 200 word newspaper report on the death of Uncle Peter. First of all, students are likely to have to re-read pages 181–189 to remind themselves of the details. They are asked to include, in their newspaper reports, answers to the following questions:

1. Who reported the tramp to the Police? Stephen’s father, Mr. Wheatley.
2. Why was the tramp reported to the Police? Mr Wheatley thought that the tramp cut Stephen’s neck, although it was Keith.
3. What did the Police do? They surrounded the area in which the tramp lived.
4. What did the tramp do? He ran away from them, and stumbled over the railway lines.
5. How did the tramp die? He was hit by a train.
The students are also asked to use the following stylistic features: emotive language, adjective, interesting verb, adverb, quotation, exaggeration. These stylistic features were explored in Resource Sheet 4, but may need to be revised again for some students. The students are also reminded that newspaper reports conventionally answer all of the ‘wh’ questions in the first paragraph; some students will need help forming their opening paragraph in order to answer all of the ‘wh’ questions.

**Guided reading – Newspaper reports**

Activity 2 asks students to identify some of the stylistic conventions of newspaper reports, and then to use this knowledge to produce their own piece of newspaper writing. This guided reading activity asks the students to consider the opening of a newspaper report. Select a small group of students who would benefit from some help identifying the stylistic conventions associated with the opening paragraphs of newspaper reports.

Using Resource Sheet 5, ask the students to find the answers in the opening paragraph to the ‘wh’ questions:
- **Who?** The Evans family.
- **What?** Were killed.
- **Where?** At No.24 Embankment Close.
- **When?** At 11.31pm last night.
- **How?** By a stray German bomb.
- **Why?** The Germans were attacking West India Docks.

It is important to point out to the students that newspaper reports conventionally answer these ‘wh’ questions in the first paragraph.

Afterwards, provide the students with some newspaper reports from their local newspaper. Ask the students to explore how far the articles follow this convention.
A complete London family was brutally murdered in their sleep last night when a stray German bomb exploded in Embankment Close, just before midnight.

At 11.31pm last night, Embankment Close was violently rocked to its foundations. The frightened residents rushed out into the street to discover the devastation: a gaping crater in the road, and a pile of rubble where No. 26 used to stand. Anne and Terry Evans, and their three children aged 11, 7 and 5, all perished.

Police say that the bomb was probably dropped off target as the Germans attacked West India Docks. A spokesman said, ‘This is another example of how civilians are suffering in this war. At least the poor family would have known nothing about it.’

Gas and water supplies have been affected, and it is not known how long it will take to return services back to normal. However, the gaping hole between No.25 and No.27 Embankment Close will never return to normal.
Writing about Uncle Peter

Introduction

Stephen and Keith’s spy chase comes to a tragic end when Uncle Peter is killed by a goods train. Imagine that you were a journalist and you had been asked to cover this story. However, you would not have known that the body was Uncle Peter, but would have thought that it was the body of a tramp.

Activity

Your task is to write a two hundred word newspaper report about the death of the tramp on the railway track. In your report you have to include the following details:

1. Who reported the tramp to the Police?
2. Why was the tramp reported to the Police?
3. What did the Police do?
4. What did the tramp do?
5. How did the tramp die?

Remember, in a newspaper report:
- the first paragraph answers all of the ‘wh’ questions
- the style is formal
- the following stylistic devices are likely to be used: superlative, emotive language, adjective, interesting verb, adverb, quotation, exaggeration.
Activity 3 Analytical writing

Framework Objectives

Year 7: R6 Actively read for information; R8 Infer and deduce information; R16 Distinguish between the attitudes of characters and author; Wr19, Write reflectively about a text, taking account of the needs of others who might read it.

Year 8: R4 Read actively for meaning; Wr6 Convey a sense of character in writing; Wr18 Write a critical review of a substantial text, taking account of the context in which it was written and the likely impact on its intended readers.

Year 9: R5 Evaluate their own critical writing about texts; R6 Comment on the authorial perspectives offered in texts on individuals, community and society in texts from different cultures; Wr17 Cite specific and relevant textual evidence to justify critical judgements about texts

Activity aims:

- To respond to implied meaning.
- To produce a piece of analytical writing.

This activity asks the students to produce a piece of analytical writing which considers the changing relationship between Stephen and Keith. Resource Sheet 6 encourages the students to engage in some close reading. Resource Sheet 6 leads the students through a piece of analytical writing.

Provide the students with Resource Sheet 6. The students are asked to closely read two extracts and to answer the following questions:

Extract A

1 Why is Stephen surprised that Keith allowed Stephen to be his friend? Stephen thinks that Keith is so superior that it is surprising that he has anything to do with Keith.

2 This passage makes it clear that Keith is the dominant one in this relationship. However, does this passage say anything about the social differences between Stephen and Keith? The reference to the different coloured belts picks up a point made earlier in the novel: Keith goes to an exclusive private school, while Stephen goes to the local school. However, the reference to Officers and Other ranks also suggests a social divide, as Officers usually came from a different social background to the Other Ranks.

Extract B

1 The reader knows that Mrs Hayward is not a German spy. Is there anything in this passage to suggest that Stephen actually realises that this is just another game? References to Disguises Kit and invisible ink suggest that Stephen just sees this issue as another exciting game of make believe, like all of the other make believe games he and Keith play.

2 What evidence is there that Stephen thinks that his family is boring people compared to Keith’s relatives? Stephen says that he doesn’t have ‘even one parent of any interest!’
Provide the students with Resource Sheet 7. The students are asked to produce a piece of analytical writing: How does the relationship between Stephen and Keith change during the period covered by the novel *Spies*? The students are provided with specific page references and prompts to help them construct their response to this question. The following notes might be helpful in supporting the students’ to arrive at their own responses to the extracts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page No.</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11–14</td>
<td>These pages tell you about the sorts of things that Stephen and Keith did together. Because they did so much together we are likely to say that their relationship was a good one.</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>53–56</td>
<td>These pages describe the boys’ first spying mission. We can see which of the boys is the dominant one in the relationship.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>74–78</td>
<td>This extract describes the two boys following Mrs Hayward through the tunnel. Again, it is possible to see who is the dominant one in the relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>101–107</td>
<td>In this extract Stephen goes through the tunnel on his own at night to try to find some evidence to impress Keith. This suggests something about the way Stephen feels about the boys’ relationship. However, notice how Keith responds to Stephen. What does this suggest?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mr Hayward had become increasingly concerned about his wife’s behaviour, and he discovered that Mrs Hayward had asked Stephen to deliver some food, medicine and a letter to someone. It seems that Mr Hayward has made it clear to Keith that he does not want him playing with Stephen.

The final obstacle to their relationship was the fact that Stephen, in a moment of weakness, had shared all of their secrets with Barbara. Keith probably felt betrayed, or perhaps he also felt jealous. He might even have felt embarrassed because Barbara would realise that most of Keith’s secrets were extremely childish. For example, the bayonet was actually just a bread knife.

**Guided reading – PQD**

Activity 3 requires the students to produce a piece of analytical writing, focused on the relationship between Stephen and Keith. Students will need to closely read some extracts from the novel, and then discuss the relationship between Stephen and Keith.

For this guided reading activity select a small group of students who might have difficulty using textual references to support their analytical writing. First of all, read the passage on Resource Sheet 8 together. Show the students that the passage is an example of the use of PQD: a **Point** has been made, a **Quotation** has been used to support this **Point**, and then the quotation is **Discussed**.

Now, provide the students with the following two quotations, and work together with the students to incorporate the quotations into a paragraph that uses PQD. These two quotations come from pages 178-179 when Keith threatens Stephen with a sharp knife. The first quotation suggests that Keith enjoys the power he has to frighten his friend. The second quotation shows that Stephen’s tears are not just because of the pain, but also because he has been humiliated. Perhaps he is aware at this moment that he and Stephen could not continue to be friends after this incident.

1. ‘Suddenly his face is just in front of mine, though, smiling again, and I can feel the point of the bayonet against my throat.’
2. ‘I know my eyes are filling with tears of pain and humiliation.’
6 Stephen and Keith

Stephen and Keith have a very interesting relationship that changes through the novel. Sometimes we are told very clearly about the way the boys feel about each other, but sometimes we have to assume from the details that the writer gives us.

Re-read the following extracts from Spies. Afterwards, answer the questions that appear below each of the extracts.

Extract A

I was acutely aware, even then, of my incomprehensible good fortune in being Keith’s friend. Now I think about it with adult hindsight it seems more surprising still. Not just his belt but everything about him was yellow and black; everything about me was plainly green and black. He was the officer corps in our two man army. I was the Other Ranks – and grateful to be so.

We had a great many enterprises and projects in hand, and in all of them he was the leader and I was the led. I see now that he was only the first in a whole series of dominant figures in my life whose disciple I became. His authority was entirely warranted by his intellectual and imaginative superiority.

Page 11

1 Why is Stephen surprised that Keith allowed Stephen to be his friend?
2 This passage makes it clear that Keith is the dominant one in this relationship. However, does this passage say anything about the social differences between Stephen and Keith?

Extract B

So, I’m surprised, certainly, but not as surprised as I should be now. And of course I’m immediately excited, because I can see all kinds of interesting new possibilities opening up, for hiding and watching in the gloaming, for sending and receiving messages in invisible ink, for wearing the moustaches and beards in Keith’s disguises kit, for examining things through Keith’s microscope.

I think I feel a brief pang of admiring jealousy for yet another demonstration of his unending good fortune. A father in the Secret Services and a mother who’s a German spy – when the rest of us can’t muster even one parent of any interest!

Page 29

1 The reader knows that Mrs Hayward is not a German spy. Is there anything in this passage to suggest that Stephen actually realises that this is just another game?
2 What evidence is there that Stephen thinks that his family are boring people compared to Keith’s relatives?
Changes in Stephen and Keith’s relationship

At the beginning of the novel Stephen and Keith seem to be very good friends, doing everything together. However, as the novel progresses their relationship changes, and then finally breaks down.

Your task is to produce a piece of analytical writing to answer the following question: ‘How does the relationship between Stephen and Keith change during the period covered by the novel Spies?’

Structure your essay so that you:

- First, write an introductory paragraph which outlines how Stephen and Keith used to get on, but why their relationship breaks down.
- Next, explain how the boys were close, but that Keith was the dominant one in the relationship.
- Afterwards, show how and why their relationship broke down.
- Finally, sum up your ideas in a conclusion.

You will need to re-read some extracts from the novel before you can write your essay. The table below suggests the extracts that you need to read, and gives you some prompts about why each extract is important for your essay.

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<td>5 119–123</td>
<td>Stephen visits Keith but the meeting is very tense. What evidence is there in this extract that the boys’ relationship is coming to an end? What do you think is the conflict between the two boys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 177–181</td>
<td>This is quite a violent scene, in which Keith threatens Stephen with a sharp knife. It is clear that the boys’ relationship has come to an end. But why do you think it has?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During Stephen and Keith’s first spying session we can see that Keith is the one in control. For example, Keith does all of the observations, and Stephen’s job is to write all of the details down in their logbook. When Mrs McAfee gives Mrs Stott a pair of secateurs Stephen whispers ‘Shall I write it down in the logbook’ Keith ‘shakes his head.’ We can see two things from this brief incident. Firstly, Stephen does not trust himself to make decisions about what to record in the logbook, which suggests that he is a weak character. But, we can also see how superior Stephen feels – he doesn’t even bother to answer Stephen with words, but just shakes his head.
Further study areas

While this novel is set during WWII, the issue of children growing up is relevant to any historical period. The following study areas provide ideal opportunities for creating interesting and stimulating activities:

Author's craft: Explore the use of more than one narrative perspective. Almost all of the novel is related in the present tense, but from two time perspectives: Stephen as a child, and Stephen as an old man reflecting on himself as a child.

Analytical writing: Produce a piece of analytical writing which considers whether the adults should have dealt with Stephen and Keith in a different way.

Collaborative drama: Act out any of the conversations between Stephen and Keith. The focus should be on presenting the relative statuses of the two characters.

Independent research/Information writing: Research the social conditions of the civilians in the UK during WWII. Produce a poster to illustrate what you discover.

Personal view: Would you have helped a deserter?

Reading for pleasure

Although Spies is set during the Second World War, it actually explores the global and timeless issue of growing up. If the students have enjoyed this novel they will also enjoy Jake’s Tower by Elizabeth Laird. Jake has to grow up quickly when his mother’s boyfriend becomes violent. They will also enjoy The Garbage King by Elizabeth Laird. This novel focuses on two children who grow up in the most extreme of conditions in Addis Ababa: Mamo, an orphan who is sold as a slave, and Dani, a rich boy who runs away from home to escape his father.